

Report

Standards Committee

Part 1

Date: 7th January 2021

Item No: 6

Subject Succession Planning – Appointment of new Independent Members of Standards Committee

Purpose To agree the process for the appointment of two new Independent Members of Standards Committee.

Author Head of Law and Regulation

Ward General

Summary In accordance with the Standards Committee (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 “the Regulations”), independent members are appointed for a period of four years, but they can be re-elected for a second term of office. However, after a consecutive period of 8 years’ service, their term of office automatically comes to an end.

The terms of office of two independent members will end in March 2021 and October 2021 respectively. Therefore, Standards Committee are requested to agree the process for the appointment of replacement independent members.

Proposal To agree the process for the appointment of two new Independent Members of Standards Committee.

Action by Head of Law and Regulation

Timetable Immediate

Background

1. In accordance with the Standards Committee (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 “the Regulations”), independent members are appointed for a period of four years, but they can be re-elected for a second term of office. However, after a consecutive period of 8 years’ service, their term of office automatically comes to an end.
2. The current Chair of Standards Committee was originally appointed in March 2013 and, after serving two terms of office, his current tenure will end in March 2021. Mrs Tracey Britton was originally appointed in October 2013 and, therefore, her two successive terms of office will end in October 2021.
3. Therefore, it will be necessary for Standards Committee to agree the arrangements and process for succession planning, to appoint new replacement independent members, to succeed the current members when their respective terms of office expire. In addition, a new independent Chair of Standards Committee will need to be appointed at the next meeting of the Committee.
4. The Regulations provide for an open and transparent appointments process and require that the vacancies for new independent members need to be advertised in two local newspapers (which cannot include the Council’s own newspaper, “Newport Matters”). Therefore, it is recommended that the vacancies should be advertised in the South Wales Argus and the Western Mail, in addition to being published on the Council website. A draft form of advertisement is attached at [Appendix 1](#).
5. The Regulations also provide that independent members of Standards Committee must be independent of the Council and cannot be,
 - (a) a serving Member or officer (or the spouse or partner of a Councillor or officer) of the Council, any other local authority or community council
 - (b) a former member or officer of Newport City Council
 - (c) have been a former member or officer of any other council within the last 12 months
 - (d) be active in local or national politics

A draft job requirement form and application form is attached at [Appendix 2](#)

6. In accordance with the Regulations, an appointments panel must be established to interview shortlisted candidates and make recommendations to the Council regarding the appointment of the successful applicants. The appointments panel must comprise at least one Councillor, one Community Council representative and two independent members.
7. The immediate requirement for succession planning is to appoint a replacement for the Chair of the Committee whose term of office ends in March 2021. Mrs Britton’s term of office will not end until October 2021 but Committee may wish to consider applications for her replacement at the same time, to avoid the need to re-advertise and recruit in the Autumn.

Options Available

8. Standards Committee are, therefore, requested to

- (a) note the Report and the requirements for succession planning to appoint two new independent members;
- (b) approve the draft advertisement, job requirement form and application form;
- (c) establish an appointments panel.

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

- 9. There are no financial implications. The new independent members will be entitled to payment of an attendance allowance and also reimbursement of expenses, in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Allowances. However, these payments are already provided for in the current budget.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

- 10. Included in the Report.

Staffing Implications: Comments of Head of People and Business Change

- 11. There are no staffing or policy implications.

Dated: 30th December 2020

Appendix 1

NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL

VACANCIES FOR INDEPENDENT MEMBERS OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The Council is looking to appoint new independent members to its Standards Committee, following the expiry of the terms of office of the current members.

The Standards Committee is established under the Local Government Act 2000 and the Standards Committees (Wales) Regulations 2001 (as amended). The Committee is responsible for promoting and maintaining high standards of ethical conduct by elected and co-opted members of the Council and local community councils, monitoring compliance with the Members Code of Conduct, dealing with any reports of breaches of the Code and determining any appropriate action.

The Committee comprises 5 independent members, 3 Council members and 1 Community Council member. The Chair and Vice-Chair must be independent members.

To be eligible, applicants must be independent of the Council and, therefore,

- must not be a current member or officer (or the spouse of any current member or officer) of Newport City Council, any other local authority or community council
- must not be a former member or officer of Newport City Council
- must not have been a former member or officer of any other council within the last 12 months

In addition, applicants should

- have a knowledge and understanding of local government
- not be active in local or national politics
- recognise and understand the principles of high ethical standards in public life
- be able to display independent thought and an unbiased attitude
- be able to understand and weigh up evidence

The Committee meets at least four times a year and more frequently, as required. The quarterly meetings are usually held after 5.00 pm on week-days, but special meetings and hearings may need to be arranged at other times. Currently, under Covid-19 restrictions, meetings of the Committee are held remotely using Microsoft Teams applications.

A fee as prescribed by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales will be paid for attendance at meetings (currently £210 per day/£105 per half day or £256 per day/£128 per half day for the Chair). Independent members are appointed for a term of 4 years but are eligible to be re-elected for one further term. Appropriate training will be provided.

Interviews will be conducted by a panel of 5 members of the Standards Committee who will make recommendations to the Council. The successful applicants would be expected to take up the appointment following confirmation of the appointment by the Council.

To apply for one of these vacancies, please click on this link <Application Form> download the application form and, once completed, please return to:-

Head of Law & Regulation, Civic Centre, Newport, South Wales NP20 4UR [f.a.o. Anne Jenkins] or return by e-mail to anne.jenkins@newport.gov.uk by [date]

Newport City Council is committed to working towards being more representative of the population that we serve and particularly welcomes applications from minority, ethnic communities represented or living in the City. Selection will be made on ability and skills to undertake the role.

Appendix 2

NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL

INDEPENDENT MEMBER OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE

KEY PURPOSE

Newport City Council (“the Council”) has established a Standards Committee in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000 and the Standards Committees (Wales) Regulations 2001 (as amended). The Committee comprises 5 independent members, 3 Council members and 1 Community Council member. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson must be independent members.

KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES

The role of the Standards Committee is to:-

- promote and maintain high standards of ethical conduct by elected and co-opted members of the Council and local community councils
- monitor compliance with the Members Code of Conduct
- deal with any reports of breaches of the Code and determine any appropriate action

Independent members are required to:-

- Attend (either in person or remotely via MS Teams) a minimum of 4 committee meetings per year and additional meetings, as required.
- Participate in the promotion of high ethical standards and compliance with the Members Code of Conduct and contribute towards the effective discharge of the statutory role and responsibilities of the Standards Committee.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

Independent members should have

- High ethical standards
- An ability to understand and weigh up evidence
- An ability to display independent thinking and an unbiased attitude
- Good communication skills, both written and oral

Knowledge and experience of local government functions would be advantageous

A fee as prescribed by Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales will be paid for attendance at meetings.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS

Independent members must be independent of the Council and cannot

- be a serving Member or officer (or the spouse or partner of a Councillor or officer) of the Council, any other local authority or community council
- be a former member or officer of Newport City Council
- have been a former member or officer of any other council within the last 12 months
- be active in local or national politics

Independent members will be required to sign an undertaking to comply with the Council's Code of Conduct.

Independent members are appointed for a term of 4 years but are eligible to be re-elected for one further term. Appropriate training will be provided.

JOB REQUIREMENT FORM

INDEPENDENT MEMBER OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Requirement	Essential or Desirable	How tested (S) used at shortlisting
Education/Qualifications/ Knowledge		
1.1 Good educational background	E	Application Form (S)
1.2 Good understanding of the principles of high ethical standards in public life	E	Application Form (S)/ Interview
1.3 Knowledge and understanding of local government	D	Application Form (S)/Interview
Experience		
1.1 Relevant work experience in the public sector, voluntary sector or business community	E	Application Form (S)
1.2 Local Government experience	D	Application Form (S)
1.3 Experience of a role in the public sector with public accountability	D	Application Form (S)
Aptitude and Skills		
1.1 Good communication and interpersonal skills, both written and oral;	E	Interview
1.2 An ability to understand and weigh up evidence	E	Interview
1.3 An ability to work effectively with Councillors and officers	E	Interview
1.4 An ability to assess issues relating to ethical standards and to identify and evaluate solutions.	E	Interview
1.5 Ability and confidence to challenge and hold to account in a fair and impartial manner	E	Interview
Personal Attributes		
1.1 Demonstrate high ethical standards	E	Interview
1.2 Demonstrate commitment and enthusiasm	E	Interview
	E	Interview

1.3 Demonstrate independent thinking and an unbiased attitude	E	Interview
1.4 Demonstrate independence and objectivity		
Circumstances		
1.1 Be able to commit to attending a minimum of 4 Standards Committee meetings a year and attend any essential training and development courses.	E	Application Form (S)/Interview
1.2 Flexibility to attend meetings at different times of the day (should the need arise)	E	Application Form (S)/Interview
Equal Opportunities		
1.1 Understand and demonstrate a willingness to promote positively the Equalities policy of Newport City Council	E	Interview

**APPLICATION TO SERVE AS INDEPENDENT MEMBER ON
NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL
STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

1. Surname:	Title: (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms)
2. Forenames:	
3. Permanent Address:	
<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	
Post Code:	
4. Home Telephone No:	
5. E-mail Address:	
6. Present Occupation (if any):	
7. Name, Address and Tel No. of Present Employer (if applicable)	
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8. Please give details of any relevant experience or knowledge of ethical standards in public life	
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9. Are you a Member or officer, former Member or officer or related to any Member or officer of Newport City Council? If so, please give details

10. Please indicate whether you are a member of any Political Party and provide details of any activities of a political nature in which you are involved

11. Please give details of any business connection with Newport City Council or any previous dealings with the Council.

12. Please indicate and give details of any unspent criminal convictions (excluding driving offences).

13. Please give details of your availability to attend meetings of the Standards Committee and any particular working days or times when you would generally be unable to attend:

14. Do you undertake any other public role, for example, Justice of the Peace, School Governor, Trade Union Official or Community Council Member? If so, please provide details

15. Please indicate why you are interested in serving on the Council's Standards Committee (continue on separate sheet, if necessary):

Signed:

Date: